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To Jacqueline — Ford E. Sitton

January 1987.

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SELECTED POEMS
OF
MAURICE BARING

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SELECTED POEMS
OF
MAURICE BARING

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NOTE

This selection of poems written between 1892 and 1930 has been made by myself.

Per Ardua and *Cecil Spencer* appeared in the *Times*, *Ivo Grenfell* in the *Morning Post*, and some of the Stopshorts in the *New Statesman*.

My thanks are due to the editors of those newspapers for allowing me to reprint them.

M. B.

April, 1930.

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SELECTED POEMS
OF
MAURICE BARING

IN MEMORIAM A.H.

Auberon Herbert, Captain Lord Lucas, R.F.C.
killed, 3rd November, 1926

Νωμᾶται δ' ἐν ἀτρυγέτῳ χάει

The wind had blown away the rain
That all day long had soaked the level plain.
Against the horizon's fiery wrack,
The sheds loomed black.
And higher, in their tumultuous concourse met,
The streaming clouds, shot-riddled banners, wet
With the flickering storm,
Drifted and smouldered, warm
With flashes sent
From the lower firmament.
And they concealed—
They only here and there through rifts revealed
A hidden sanctuary of fire and light,
A city of chrysolite.

We looked and laughed and wondered, and I said :
That orange sea, those oriflammes outspread
Were like the fanciful imaginings
That the young painter flings
Upon the canvas bold,
Such as the sage and the old

Make mock at, saying it could never be ;
And you assented also, laughingly.
I wondered what they meant,
That flaming firmament,
Those clouds so grey so gold, so wet so warm,
So much of glory and so much of storm,
The end of the world, or the end
Of the war—remoter still to me and you, my friend.

Alas ! it meant not this, it meant not that :
It meant that now the last time you and I
Should look at the golden sky,
And the dark fields large and flat,
And smell the evening weather,
And laugh and talk and wonder both together.

The last, last time. We nevermore should meet
In France or London street,
Or fields of home. The desolated space
Of life shall nevermore
Be what it was before.
No one shall take your place.
No other face
Can fill that empty frame.
There is no answer when we call your name.
We cannot hear your shout upon the stair.
We turn to speak and find a vacant chair.
Something is broken which we cannot mend.
God has done more than take away a friend
In taking you ; for all that we have left
Is bruised and irremediably bereft.

There is none like you. Yet not that alone
Do we bemoan ;
But this : that you were greater than the rest,
And better than the best.

O liberal heart fast-rooted to the soil,
O lover of ancient freedom and proud toil,
Friend of the gipsies and all wandering song,
The forest's nursling and the favoured child
Of woodlands wild—
O brother to the birds and all things free,
Captain of liberty !
Deep in your heart the restless seed was sown ;
The vagrant spirit fretted in your feet ;
We wondered could you tarry long,
And brook for long the cramping street,
Or would you one day sail for shores unknown,
And shake from you the dust of towns, and spurn
The crowded market-place—and not return ?
You found a sterner guide ;
You heard the guns. Then, to their distant fire,
Your dreams were laid aside ;
And on that day, you cast your heart's desire
Upon a burning pyre ;
You gave your service to the exalted need,
Until at last from bondage freed,
At liberty to serve as you loved best,
You chose the noblest way. God did the rest.

So when the spring of the world shall shrive our stain,
After the winter of war,

When the poor world awakes to peace once more,
After such night of ravage and of rain,
You shall not come again.
You shall not come to taste the old Spring weather,
To gallop through the soft, untrampled heather,
To bathe and bake your body on the grass.
We shall be there, alas!
But not with you. When Spring shall wake the earth
And quicken the scarred fields to the new birth,
Our grief shall grow. For what can Spring renew
More fiercely for us than the need of you?

That night I dreamt they sent for me and said
That you were missing. "Missing, missing—dead":
I cried when in the morning I awoke,
And all the world seemed shrouded in a cloak;
But when I saw the sun,
And knew another day had just begun,
I brushed the dream away, and quite forgot
The nightmare's ugly blot.
So was the dream forgot. The dream came true.
Before the night I knew
That you had flown away into the air
For ever. Then I cheated my despair.
I said
That you were safe—or wounded—but not dead.
Alas! I knew
Which was the false and true.

And after days of watching, days of lead,
There came the certain news that you were dead.
You had died fighting, fighting against odds,

Such as in war the Gods
Æthereal dared when all the world was young ;
Such fighting as blind Homer never sung,
Nor Hector nor Achilles never knew ;
High in the empty blue.

High, high, above the clouds, against the setting sun,
The fight was fought, and your great task was done.
Of all your brave adventures this the last
The bravest was and best ;
Meet ending to a long embattled past,
This swift, triumphant, fatal quest,
Crowned with the wreath that never perisheth,
And diadem of honourable death ;
Swift Death aflame with offering supreme,
And mighty sacrifice,
More than all mortal dream ;
A soaring death, and near to Heaven's gate ;
Beneath the very walls of Paradise.
Surely with soul elate,
You heard the destined bullet as you flew,
And surely your prophetic spirit knew
That you had well deserved that shining fate.

Here is no waste,
No burning Might-have-been,
No bitter aftertaste,
None to censure, none to screen,
Nothing awry, nor anything misspent ;
Only content, content beyond content,
Which hath not any room for betterment.

God, who made you valiant, strong and swift,
And maimed you with a bullet long ago,
And cleft your riotous ardour with a rift,
And checked your youth's tumultuous overflow,
Gave back your youth to you,
And packed in moments rare and few
Achievements manifold
And happiness untold,
And bade you spring to Death as to a bride,
In manhood's ripeness, power and pride,
And on your sandals the strong wings of youth.
He let you leave a name
To shine on the entablatures of truth,
For ever :
To sound for ever in answering halls of fame.

For you soared onwards to that world which rags
Of clouds, like tattered flags,
Concealed ; you reached the walls of chrysolite,
The mansions white ;
And losing all, you gained the civic crown
Of that eternal town,
Wherein you passed a rightful citizen
Of the bright commonwealth ablaze beyond our ken.

Surely you found companions meet for you
In that high place ;
You met there face to face
Those you had never known, but whom you knew ;
Knights of the Table Round,
And all the very brave, the very true,

With chivalry crowned ;
The captains rare,
Courteous and brave beyond our human air ;
Those who had loved and suffered overmuch,
Now free from the world's touch.
And with them were the friends of yesterday,
Who went before and pointed you the way ;
And in that place of freshness, light and rest,
Where Lancelot and Tristram vigil keep
Over their King's long sleep,
Surely they made a place for you,
Their long-expected guest,
Among the chosen few,
And welcomed you, their brother and their friend,
To that companionship which hath no end.

And in the portals of the sacred hall
You hear the trumpet's call,
At dawn upon the silvery battlement,
Re-echo through the deep
And bid the sons of God to rise from sleep
And with a shout to hail
The sunrise on the city of the Grail :
The music that proud Lucifer in Hell
Missed more than all the joys that he forwent
You hear the solemn bell
At vespers, when the oriflammes are furled ;
And then you know that somewhere in the world,
That shines far-off beneath you like a gem,
They think of you, and when you think of them
You know that they will wipe away their tears,

And cast aside their fears ;
That they will have it so,
And in no other wise ;
That it is well with them because they know,
With faithful eyes,
Fixed forward and turned upwards to the skies,
That it is well with you,
Among the chosen few,
Among the very brave, the very true.

PER ARDUA

1914–1918

On an August morning Squadrons three
Of the R.F.C.
Flew over the sea,
From England to France,
As gaily as to a dance.
And two days later, a fourth one too,
From Gosport flew ;
And they landed in Picardy.
They are off to Germany, so they say,
But they know not yet how long is the way.

Near Maubeuge town, at the break of day,
They heard a man say :
" They have gone back." " They ?
" Who, the Germans ? " " No,
Not the Germans, we,
We shall all have to go—
We must leave Maubeuge, and as quick as may be."
Back to La Fère the squadrons fly,
In a lashing rain through a pelting sky :
And machines are landed without mishap.

Next day, as the pilot reads his map,
The long black lines he has marked there show

That all is not well on the ground below :
From East to West, in narrowing loops,
They converge and close on the British troops.

At the end of the field, on that clear sky-line,
Will German helmets suddenly shine ?
But never a Uhlan comes that way,
And back to Compiègne they fly next day.

Now it grows dark, and like a tawny shield
The full moon rises on the misty field,
And veils the drowsy world with silver bliss.
The spectral poplars tremble at her kiss.
" Oh ! why ? Oh ! why ? "
Is the murmured cry,
" Must men to war on a night like this ? "

At Juilly, in the evening calm and cool,
The pilots doze in the deserted school ;
And some are bathing in a shaded pool.
All of a sudden, a scare !
" The Germans are there, and here, and there ! "
The Commander-in-Chief must away,
As quick as he may ;

But the R.F.C.
Must wait patiently
For the morning light.
And the night
Steals by,
Without disturbance from the enemy.

At Serris, the farmer looks grave ;
His cart is harnessed and he packs his box.
" The Prussians are unfurling like a wave."
His wife more slow—
She is loth to go—
Takes a lingering look
At the inglenook,
The pears, nasturtiums, and the fragrant phlox.
There's a Zeppelin high
In the sunset sky ;
Off flies a pilot to give it chase ;
But it melts away in the darkening space.

At Melun a child makes a horrible din
On a trumpet of tin ;
But the General says that the tune that rings
In his head, is a tune that has wings, has wings,
Like the soaring machines of the R.F.C.
The *Te Deum* of victory.

The Battle of the Marne is fought and won.
The retreat is done.

[II]

At Saponay :
The mellow haze blends day with golden day.
Each garden wall is laden with ripe plums ;
And only in the sky an engine hums.
The fields are bathed in light and shorn of sheaves ;

Untouched by any gardener lie the leaves ;
And on the stubble the long shadows play.
Afar like little dots the ricks are brown,
And silent as a Sunday is the town.
Who reaped these fields ? The men are far away ;
That woman and that child, that cart-horse grey ?
And on the straw a sleepy pilot lies,
And hardly opens his sky-wearied eyes,
As another lands, or another starts again
And soars into the harvestless inane.
And friend with friend
Is dreaming when this long, long war shall end.
They soar into the future on hope's wing.
" It cannot last much longer than the spring."
And in the quiet, cloudless evening hour
The broad white wings descend with purring power.
The moonlight silvers the dark aerodrome ;
And camp fires glow, and men sing songs of home.

The autumn and the winter and the wet :
The war is set.
New squadrons come from home and samples new
Of aircraft all too late and all too few.
And every day the same routine,
Upon the old, upon the new machine !
The short, the long reconnaissance—to Ghent ;
Blurred maps and dripping coats and steaming stuff:
A broken strut, an under-carriage bent,
And petrol just enough
To reach the line.
But never a machine to reach the Rhine.

And some are driven downward out of hand,
And some beyond the line are forced to land.
And some are shot by foe and some by friend.
Some on a peaceful errand meet their end.
It's a long, long way each pilot has to fare :
It's a long way to eight thousand in the air.

[III]

The spring, and the offensive of the spring:
Each squadron now has grown into a Wing.
News comes from wireless pilots out of sight,
And the first bombs are dropped into the night ;
But after all the fighting and the fire,
The push comes to an end, the staffs retire.
And in the air, the enemy
Newly equipped and faster far than we,
Is busy this side of the line ;
And farther off than ever seems the Rhine.
September : now new warfare must begin ;
Another challenge : and to break through and win.
The night before : a rainbow in the East,
And in the West a blaze of watery gold,
Seem like a temple, waiting for a priest
To offer up the firstfruits of the fold,
With joy and with thanksgiving and with praise,
After demented days
Of breathless orison,
For battles hardly fought and nobly won.
Not sunset, but the sunrise in a dream,

Not sunrise nor yet sunset ; not the gleam
Of autumn nor the prophecy of spring,
But an unearthly dawn ; a season new :
The shadow of the wing
Of victory : the dew
Of peace
On triumph's flaming fleece :
The sign of victory bedewed with tears ?
Yes, but not yet ; not yet for three long years.

[IV]

Another year : another battle rages,
Such as in all the ages
Has not been ;
Such prodigy and portent have not been :
Such havoc in the air, on land and sea :
Such storming of the azure's secrecy :
Such tumult in the sky's serenity.
The flying forces upon land and sea
Are now a weapon in the armoury
Of Army and of Fleet.
A little arm, and one among many, but tried,
And purposed only to sustain their side :
To help ; not, save in service, to compete.
They spot for guns :
Drop flares and messages for infantry,
And tons
Of bombs explode upon a loaded train,
And bullets fall like rain

Upon the roads, from daring pilots flying
Low as the swallow when the summer's dying.

And as the armies grow, the R.F.C.
Expands ; from England and across the sea
New pilots come to fill the vacant place
Of those who fought and disappeared in space.

For almost every day they pay the price
Of willing sacrifice.
And boys come flying, redolent of school,
Others from lives of ease, or office stool.
And some mature in years,
Deaf to all doubts and fears,
Follow their youthful captains in the sky,
And fight and die,
And leave a name upon their country's scroll.

" It's a long way to eight thousand." Oh ! how long
How long ago it seems they sang that song !
For now at twenty thousand feet they fight,
And fly three hundred miles by day or night,
Far, far across the enemy's frontier line,
And pilots wind their watches over the Rhine.

[v]

The R.N.A.S. and the R.F.C.
Now form one unity,
And work together upon land and sea.

Not only in fields of Flanders or French lands,
But in Egyptian sands,
And deserts from Iraq to Araby ;
From Arctic seashores to the Indian Sea :
From Scapa to the Rhine,
And from the snowy Alps to Palestine.
And now when battles vaster than of old
Like sea-quakes their wide tidal waves unfold,
The squadrons in formation rise and wheel,
Obedient as a line of bristling steel.
Their losses are writ large across the sky
In tracks of flame ;
Like comets, as they fall, they write their name
In the immensity.

And in the dark hour when the foe broke through,
The message was " Tails up ! " from those that flew.

[VI]

And so until the last November night,
When squadrons flew back safe from their last flight,
The work went on,
Unceasingly,
On land and sea,
In unison.
And then they left each wartime aerodrome,
And flew back home.
Squadrons and Wings, Brigades : a mighty host ;
A great thing to compare
With those four squadrons that first took the air,

From England's coast,
And flew to France,
As gaily as to a dance.

Greater in numbers but the same in kind :
The same in gallant kind and keen degree,
They flew back home again across the sea.
They flew back home again ; they left behind
Those many of their bravest and their best,
To everlasting rest,
In graves of France or Germany,
In northern or in southern sea,
Italian snows or sands of Araby.
And those who seemed half magical in flight,
And those who fought with Zeppelins in the night,
Or dived upon the enemy in his lair,

Or battled with the hail, the snow, the rain,
With sand and foam,
Or fought in single combat in the air,
Or with a task accomplished landed home,
With coughing engine and shot-riddled plane,
Never to fight again.
The young with all their life before them, gay,
But longing still to live another day ;
And those more old who sacrificed large scope,
Aims half-accomplished, and half-ripened hope,
To learn to fly and fight, and fighting, die.

Their graves are scattered very far and wide ;
And those whose record is their country's pride,

Whose written story
Is blazoned on the seamless coat of glory ;
And those who fell forgotten, and whose grave
Lies under alien soil or sand or wave,
Unhonoured by stone, epitaph, or dirge,
Save that of sighing wind or moaning surge.
But none the less their deeds and fate unsung
Like trophies in celestial vaults are hung.
Their swift eclipse is but a setting sun,
That rises on new worlds when day is done.
Like notes in a seraphic symphony,
They helped to build triumphant harmony :
To swell
The chorus of thanksgiving and of prayer,
That tolls for ever like a golden bell.

It is for this they went into the air :
It is for this they flew and fought and fell.
And they did well.

1928.

IVO GRENFELL

October 8th, 1926.

"What have they done to you, where have they
taken you?
Answer us, Ivo, my son."
"I have sailed far away on a marvellous voyage,
With Julian and Billy and Bron."

"Shall there not come to us news of you, word from
you,
Sign of you, Ivo my son?"
"I am nearer to you than the closest of whispers,
With Julian and Billy and Bron."

"The Autumn wind blows and the leaves are
deserting us,
Summer leaves, Ivo, my son."
"The same wind came blowing in Springtide and
Autumn
For Julian and Billy and Bron."

"Breathe but a message to say all is well with you,
Just a word, Ivo, my son."
"Our word to you is: 'Let God have His way with
you';
Ivo and Julian and Billy and Bron."

CECIL SPENCER

Lieut. Commander Cecil Spencer died at Malta on the 14th February, 1928, from injuries received while riding. He gained the D.S.C. and Bar and Legion of Honour for gallantry in action at Zeebrugge on 23rd April, and Ostend on May 10th, 1918.

"Lieutenant the Hon. Cecil E. R. Spencer, D.S.C., R.N. This officer was in command of a coastal motor-boat (No. 23) and escorted *Vindictive* close inshore and kept touch with her until she gave the 'last resort' signal, on which he laid and lit the flare, which greatly assisted the operation, drawing heavy fire, previously directed at the *Vindictive*, on to himself."

(*from Sir Roger Keyes' despatch, 24th July*, 1918)

It was the feast day of St. Valentine,
And turbulent and fine;
And the wind tossed the high clouds through the blue;
The dust in eddies flew,
Round and round,
On Marsa Polo Ground;
The game was fast that day;
You were not there to watch it, nor to play;
For you were racing Death in Bighi bay.

Down in the sheltered harbour it is dark.
The lights are twinkling. Hark!
The noise of carnival!
The band! the singing and the stamping feet!
The boats are taking dancers to a ball,
And masqueraders flitting through the street.
The wind has rattled over Bighi bay,
Knocked at the windows of the hospital
Throughout the day,
And made them shake.
Heedless, you would not wake;
For the last race was being run,
The struggle not yet ended, the labour still undone.

Now all is ended and now all is done.
No labour more for you on land or sea,
Adventure, sorrow or felicity,
No fighting, and no riding, no disaster, and no fun,
For all is ended now and all is done.
And all has ended well;
For us, but not for you, the sharpness of farewell.

Now through the darker air,
A more tremendous flare
Than that which with its million-candle power
You took to Zeebrugge, to draw the fire,
Is rising for you like a sun;
A still more wondrous hour,
Most secret, most supreme, your heart's desire:
As you would say:
"Swift Death and no long dalliance with decay.

When life is at its fullest and its best,
Then let the signal come in the midst of the game ! ”
The signal came.
The boat is called away.
And you go west.

Rest, grant him rest, the lapping waters sighed ;
Rest, everlasting rest, the wind replied ;
The anchorage of immortality ;
The light and dew of dawn throughout eternity.

The noise of festival came from the bay,
Heedless you lay ;
Hardly breathing, slowly dying,
While the ships in the harbour lying,
Under the starry skies,
Watched you with sleepless eyes.

And Ceres and Calypso and Bryony
All kept you company.
The last notes of the Last Post sounded and died.
You seemed to know
The time was now at hand for you to go.
More gently and more softly came your breath,
For the Angel of Death
(Oh ! noiselessly he called away the boat !)
Saluted you and saw you over the side,
And safe afloat,
Upon the eternal tide.

The sun was shining in an azure sky,
When Queen Elizabeth went proudly by,

Through the grand harbour bound for Hagiar Khim,
And bugles sounding the salute
(Whole ships were at attention stiff and mute)
Rang like the trumpets of the Seraphim.
Destroyers, submarines raced through the blue,
And overhead the roaring seaplanes flew ;
Resolution, Valiant, Warspite were under way ;
(Their firing was that day).

Good visibility, a little swell ;
All the fleet's business which you knew so well.

Upon the quarter-deck, which was your pride,
On the port side,
A space was set apart;
Elsewhere the work proceeded, noiseless, smart ;
And there in a steel coffin strong and sure,
You lay secure,
And over it the Union Jack outspread.
With arms reversed and bended head
A sailor at each corner mourned the dead.
Assistance sacrificed her " make and mend,"
And worked all night so that your journey's end
Should happen thus on board, and here at sea,
As you (they knew) and they, would have it be.

Then we reached Hagiar Khim, and there,
Facing the rocky headlands, where
Phoenicians built huge temples to strange suns,
And where perchance Ulysses watched the foam
(For this they say was once Calypso's home)

Between this high and haunted coast,
And a rock used as target for the guns,
There where a hero welcomes you for host,*
They gave you to the wave.
And there you lie with all the sea for grave.

The firing party fired its rounds of blank,
The last note of the Last Post sounded and died
The wreaths thrown over the side
Drifted upon the tide,
And sank.
And now the band
With pipe and clarion
And the gay quickstep summoned every hand
To carry on.

**Sir Walter Congreve, V.C., was buried at sea in the same place.*

Rome, *February 27th, 1928.*

DIFFUGERE NIVES

1917. *To J.C.S.*

The snows have fled, the hail, the lashing rain,
Before the Spring.
The grass is starred with buttercups again,
The blackbirds sing.

Now spreads the month that feast of lovely things
We loved of old.
Once more the swallow glides with darkling wings
Against the gold.

Now the brown bees about the peach-trees boom
Upon the walls ;
And far away beyond the orchard's bloom
The cuckoo calls.

The season holds a festival of light—
For you, for me,
The shadows are abroad, there falls a blight
On each green tree.

And every leaf unfolding, every flower
Brings bitter meed ;
Beauty of the morning and the evening hour
Quickens our need.

All is reborn, but never any Spring
Can bring back this ;
Nor any fullness of midsummer bring
The voice we miss.

The smiling eyes shall smile on us no more ;
The laughter clear,
Too far away on the forbidden shore,
We shall not hear.

Bereft of these until the day we die,
We both must dwell ;
Alone, alone, and haunted by a cry :
" Hail and farewell ! "

Yet when the scythe of Death shall near us hiss,
Through the cold air,
Then on the shuddering marge of the abyss,
They will be there.

They will be there to lift us from sheer space
And empty night ;
And we shall turn and see them face to face
In the new light.

So shall we pay the unabated price
Of their release ;
And found on our consenting sacrifice
Their lasting peace.

The hopes that fall like leaves before the wind,
The baffling waste,
And every earthly joy that leaves behind
A mortal taste.

The uncompleted end of all things dear,
The clanging door
Of Death, for ever loud with the last fear,
Haunt them no more.

The uncompleted end of all employ,
The wasted store,
The aftertaste of every mortal joy,
Vex them no more.

No more they crave in vain of heedless Fate
A last farewell;
No more for them the words: "No more," "Too late,"
Repeat their knell.

Without them the awakening world is dark
With dust and mire;
Yet as they went they flung to us a spark,
A thread of fire

To guide us, while beneath the sombre skies
Faltering we tread,
Until for us like morning stars shall rise
The deathless dead.

JULIAN GRENFELL

Because of you we will be glad and gay,
Remembering you, we will be brave and strong ;
And hail the advent of each dangerous day,
And meet the last adventure with a song.

And, as you proudly gave your jewelled gift,
We'll give our lesser offering with a smile,
Nor falter on that path where, all too swift,
You led the way and leapt the golden stile.

Whether new paths, new heights to climb, you find,
Or gallop through the unfooted asphodel,
We know you know we shall not lag behind,

Nor halt to waste a moment on a fear ;
And you will speed us onward with a cheer,
And wave beyond the stars that all is well.

PIERRE

I saw you starting for another war,
The emblem of adventure and of youth,
So that men feared and said : " In very truth
He goes away, and to return no more."

And then, out there, they told me you were dead,
Taken and killed ; how was it that I knew,
Whatever else was true, that was not true ?
And then I saw you pale upon your bed,

Scarcely two years ago, when you were sent
Back from the margin of the dim abyss ;
For Death had sealed you with a warning kiss,

And let you go to meet a nobler fate :
To serve in fellowship, O fortunate !
To die in battle with your regiment.

ICARUS

Translated from the French of Philippe Desportes

Here fell the daring Icarus in his prime,
He who was brave enough to scale the skies ;
And here bereft of plume his body lies,
Leaving the valiant envious of that climb.

O rare performance of a soul sublime,
That with small loss such great advantage buys !
Happy mishap ! fraught with so rich a prize,
That bids the vanquished triumph over time.

So new a path his youth did not dismay,
His wings but not his noble heart said nay ;
He had the glorious sun for funeral fire ;

He died upon a high adventure bent ;
The sea his grave, his goal the firmament :
Great is the tomb, but greater the desire.

AUGUST 1918

In a French Village

I hear the tinkling of the cattle bell
In the broad stillness of the afternoon ;
High in the cloudless haze the harvest moon
Is paler than the phantom of a shell.

A girl is drawing water from a well,
I hear the clatter of her wooden shoon ;
Two mothers to their sleeping babies croon,
And the hot village feels the drowsy spell.

Sleep, child, the Angel of Death his wings has spread ;
His engines scour the land, the sea, the sky ;
And all the weapons of Hell's armoury

Are ready for the blood that is their bread ;
And many a thousand men to-night must die,
So many that they will not count the dead.

EPITAPH

Here murdered by the frenzied, not the free,
Lies the last monarch of a star-crossed line ;
Anointed Emperor by right divine,
From Arctic icefields to the Aral Sea,

From Warsaw to the walls of Tartary.
His country's travail claimed a high design ;
Too stubborn to respond, he shrank supine
Before the large demand of destiny.

Bereft of crown, and throne, and hearth, and name,
Grief lent him majesty, and suffering
Gave him a more than regal diadem.

His people kissed the desecrated hem
Of robes not now of splendour but of shame,
And waited for the rising of the King.

POEMS FROM "C"

[I]

VALE

Farewell, this is the first, the worst Farewell,
Good-bye to the long dream;
I hear the tolling of my boyhood's knell,
And I must cross the stream.

Good-bye, South Meadow, Athens, Cuckoo Weir,
Good-bye, tall Brocas trees;
To me you are more sacred and more fair
Than the Hesperides.

Good-bye, dear Library, dear musty shelves,
Worn books and marble bust,
Where over tables scholars skipped like elves,
And raised a cloud of dust.

But there I saw—as through a misty veil
A chalice of white fire—
The light of Shelley's song, and heard the tale
Of his divine desire.

'Twas there I read how, led by fatal chance,
A mortal loved the Moon;
And thus I learnt the language of romance,
And heard the magic tune.

The little book was like a silver key
To many-coloured lands,
Where wondrous harps upon a ghostly sea
Answer a mermaid's hands.

To-morrow I shall be beyond the spell,
The fields behind ; the road
Before me ; banished from the wishing well,
And on my back a load.

Yet none can steal the tasted happiness,
And if I meet dark hours,
Dear Mother, I will turn in my distress
Back to thy chiming towers.

Though pangs begotten of sweet memory
Make worse the present woe,
I'll turn to thee and say : " At Eton I
Was happy long ago.

" What can I give thee, Mother, in return
For all thy gifts to me ?
What if no laurel shall adorn my urn,
Nor deed of high degree ?

" Others with honour, glory and green bays
Shall brighten thy bright fame ;
I, with no more than love, can swell thy praise
With one forgotten name."

[11]

I. M. H.

This is the house we used to know so well;
    This the front door,
And locked. I had no need to ring this bell—
    Never before.

Where is the sundial with its sphere of gold?
    The vane's bright comb?
All gone! but from the bank the soft black mould
    Still whispers: "Home."

Those paths, once cared for, are now choked with
        grass;
    They've stripped the tower
Of ivy, and exchanged for costly glass
    Our trellised bower.

The old, the known is crumbling in decay;
    The new gives pain;
The soul of home has fled too far away
    To come again.

The door is open: what is this strange face?
    "I'll show you round."—
"I think I know the way." Ah! here's the place;
    "Tom Tiddler's ground."

D
CANADA

I walk through empty rooms ; she tells her tale :
" They used to smoke
Here, after dinner. Here, before the sale,
The walls were oak."

Upstairs. " Sir, mind the step,—this used to be
The nursery floor."—
There is but one thing left that speaks to me :
A creaking door.

And here, once more I breathe while shadows fall
The smell of hay ;
The pictures come to life upon the wall ;
My prayers I say.

But hark ! what wondrous bird is this that sings
So sweet a tune ?
Now I am borne away on elfin wings,
Beyond the moon.

The morning sun is streaming through the blind—
" They, come, they come !
The soldiers ! Hark ! ' The girl I left behind ! '
The fifes ! the drum ! "

Back to the garden . . . here we used to hide . . .
Where is the spot,
The summer-house ? his garden by its side,
My rival plot ?

A forest now of grass with weeds entwined.
Ah, there's the mouse!
Ivy! I crawl beneath it, and I find
Our summer-house.

And here, with buttercups and watering-can,
We made a brew;
Beneath that tree we called "Fort Caliban,"
A toadstool grew.

The kitchen-garden. Here's the stagnant tank,
The floating mole;
The pond with dock leaves and with nettles rank,
The rat's dark hole.

All is the same. But all is not the same:
For he is dead.
The well-known cry: "Hurrah! I've won the game!"
The curly head,

The laughing eyes, the angry, stammering speech,
The heart of gold—
All that is far away beyond our reach,
Beneath the mould.

He lies not here, but far away beyond
His native land;
Beneath the alien rose, the tropic frond,
The burning sand.

His life was like a February day,
Too warm too soon :
A foretaste of the spring that cannot stay
Beyond the noon.

As swallows, when September pomps conceal
A frosty spell,
Fly low about the horses' heads, and wheel,
To say farewell,

So he, at some sure summons in the wind,
Or sky, took wing,
And soared to the gold South. He stayed behind
When came the spring.

They say we'll meet in some transfigured space,
Beyond the sun.
I need you here, in this familiar place
Of tears and fun.

I do not need you changed, dissolved in air,
Nor rarefied—
I need you all imperfect as you were,
Here, at my side.

And yet I cannot think that Death's cold wind
Has killed the flame
Of you for ever, and has left behind
Only a name,

That mortal life is but a derelict ship,
Without a sail;
The soul no stronger than a farthing dip
Matched with a gale.

I ask, I seek, and to the empty air
In vain I cry;
The God they worship, if He hears my prayer,
Makes no reply.

Lord, give to me the grain of mustard seed
That moves the mount:
Give me a drop of water in my need
From Thy full fount.

Around me and above me and beneath
Yawns the abyss—
Show me the bridge across the gulf of Death
To banks of bliss.

Cast the dumb devil from my tomb of grief—
Help me to say:
"Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief."
Teach me to pray.

But if the fault be mine, then, Lord, forgive;
My heart is dry;
So bitter is the world I cannot live—
I dare not die.

SONNETS & LYRICS

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JULIET'S OWL

Juliet has lost her little downy owl,
The bird she loved more than all other birds
He was a darling bird, so white, so wise,
Like a monk hooded in a snowy cowl,
With sun-shy scholar's eyes.
He hooted softly in diminished thirds ;
And when he asked for mice,
He took refusal with a silent pride,
And never pleaded twice.
He was a wondrous bird, as dignified
As any Diplomat
That ever sat
By the round table of a Conference.

He was delicious, lovable and soft.
He understood the meaning of the night,
And read the riddle of the smiling stars.
When he took flight,
And roosted high aloft
Beyond the shrubbery and the garden fence,
He would return and seek his safer bars,
All of his own accord ; and he would plead
Forgiveness for the trouble and the search,
And for the anxious heart he caused to bleed,
And settle once again upon his perch,

And utter a propitiating note,
And take the heart
Of Juliet by his pretty winning ways.
His was the art
Of pleasing without effort easily.
His fluffy throat,
His sage round eye,
Sad with old knowledge, bright with young amaze,
Where are they now? ah! where?
Perchance in the pale halls of Hecate,
Or in the poplars of Elysium,
He wanders careless and completely free.
But in the regions dumb,
And in the pallid air,
He will not find a sweet, caressing hand
Like Juliet's; nor in all that glimmering land
Shall he behold a silver planet rise
As splendid as the light of Juliet's eyes.
Therefore in weeping with you, Juliet
Oh! let us not forget
To drop, with sprigs of rosemary and rue,
A not untimely tear
Upon the bier
Of him who lost so much in losing you.

SONG

From "The Black Prince"

From the bleak sand and the grey sand
(O son o' mine, good-bye),
To the shore of gold and the cornland,
To conquer or to die.

The low cloud and the grey cloud
(O son o' mine, good-bye),
It hangs and lowers like a shroud
Across the blood-red sky.

The soft sound and the loved sound
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
"*Mother, I have a mortal wound,*"
It is my own son's cry.

The horn call and the glad call
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
"*Now dig the grave and weave the pall,*
For I am soon to die."

The lone bell and the sad bell
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
"*Tell them, mother, before I fell,*
That I fought gallantly."

The known tread and the strong tread
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
" *One told me you were cold and dead,*
But I heeded not the lie."

By sunshine or by moonshine
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
" *Come back to me, O son o' mine,*
I've waited patiently."

The loud song and the strange song
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
" *I've watched and waited now so long,*
Come back before I die."

From the bleak sand and the grey sand
(O son o' mine, good-bye):
To the shore of gold and the cornland.
To conquer or to die.

ROSALIND

[1]

Drop lilies of the valley on her bier,
For Rosalind is dead, fair Rosalind ;
Fair as the first white windflower in the wind,
And frail as the first windflower of the year.

Her smile was like the foam before a wave,
Like water lit by stars her slow grey eyes ;
Her sisters were the dancing dragon-flies,
And now the wingèd moths shall haunt her grave.

There is no stone shall mark her grassy tomb,
But once a year, when dies the early bloom,
The cherry tree shall mourn for her, and shed

Frail tears, and softly shall the petals lie,
And softly fall, and falling seem to sigh :
" Fair Rosalind, frail Rosalind, is dead."

MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
MOUNT WASHINGTON, MARYLAND

ROSALIND

[II]

She has gone down into the sunless day,
There where the beckoning spring-time never comes ;
To scentless fields, where the bee never hums,
To silent woods and skies for ever grey.

Ah ! weep, for she was young and she was fair ;
She was athirst for sunshine and for mirth,
For the glad sights and sounds of the sweet earth,
And now she wanders cold in the pale air.

Have pity on the shade of Rosalind,
She stretches out her hands in vain regret,
For in thy kingdom there is no west wind,

No wheat, nor any roses, and no vine ;
She loved these things ; grant that she may forget,
And drown her dreams in sleep, calm Proserpine.

THE WOUNDED

[1]

They turn us from the long-desired door ;
Here there is shelter for the sorely spent,
But not for us ; since many a dying score
Of maimed and mangled men, whose limbs are rent

With bayonet and with bullet, crowd the floor.
We who have fought since dawn, nor tasted bread,
Although our wounds are light, our wounds are sore,
We must march on, nor shall we find a bed.

O men, O brothers, is our rest not earned ?
Shall we not seek the mountains huge and wide
Whose doors are always open ? There the guest

Sweet welcome finds ; for thou hast never turned
A stranger from thy gates, nor hast denied,
O hospitable Death, a place to rest.

Fun-Chu-Ling, *October 16, 1904*

THE WOUNDED

[II]

The wounded lie and groan upon the plain ;
And one there is whom it is vain to lift ;
So give him water. It is the last gift,
And very soon he shall not thirst again.

All white and gold the Chief with a troop of horse
Trots by. The soldier opens smiling eyes ;
Now at the latest gasp of life he cries :
" Long live ! " with all his feeble flickering force.

Before he said his say he died content,
And we, the wounded on life's battlefield,
Enrolled and sent to war to fight and die,

When conquered by the mortal wound, we cry
" Long live ! " remembering our sacrament,
When God with all His universe rides by.

Manchuria. *1904*

THE DEAD SAMURAI

TO DEATH

I had not called nor prayed for thee to come ;
No favour of the Fates I bent to ask ;
I thought but of the momentary task :
In the supreme bright hour my soul was dumb.

Yet above all the rest 'twas here and now
I longed to meet with thee, O beckoning friend ;
Before the lightning of thine eyes to bow,
And follow thee to where the triumphs end.

Therefore let those who gaze upon me here
Discern no sadness in my staring eyes
And no regret, they will not look for fear.

I dared not hope to meet thee in this place ;
Then let my smile speak rapture and surprise,
And with ineffable wonder stamp my face.

Poutilov's Hill, *October 17, 1904*

DEMOPHÖON

We shall not look upon his face again ;
The wanderer will return to us no more.
Brief was the stay ! Yet how could he remain ?
His soul was native to the ghostly shore.

The shadows of dominions huge and dim,
The scent of alien meadows far away,
The breeze that blows from Lethe followed him,
Home-sick for night, and weary of the day.

And found he peace in lands beyond the sun ?
The stillness that he craved, the dreamless home ?
Or stands he now beside the calling foam,

Still waiting till at last the sail shall gleam
And bear him from the place of dusk and dream
To the full harbours of oblivion ?

BLOSSOM

In silence in the night, an angel came,
  And breathed a song upon the wintry earth,
And lit within its frozen heart a flame ;
  And the divine still mystery of birth
Crept trembling through the slumberous fields and
    trees.
  With the first glimmer of the April morn,
    Some wondrous thing and new
Spoke in the whisper of the dawn's cold breeze—
  The world, awakening through its tears of dew,
Smiled, for in darkness blossom had been born.

As though the dawn had flung to earth her veil,
  The dew-drenched blossom glistens in the sun ;
Softer than snow, and as a mirage frail,
  It hangs in blushing lace divinely spun.
What silent plotting powers have planned this sight ?
  It is as though the never-resting loom
    Of time had ceased to ply ;
And the thin web of hours had taken flight
  Before the advent of Eternity—
As darkness, when the dawn breaks into bloom.

Alas ! the vision is a wistful smile
  Upon the cheating features of the hour ;

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Earth toils in travail, beauty is born, awhile
To shine like flame, to wither like a flower.
The fashioned wonders of man's hand and brain,
The living marble, the immortal song,
The poet's soaring dream,
Rise like the blossom, like the blossom wane;
And on the moving surface of Time's stream
Their life is neither briefer nor more long.

Sorrow descends upon the mortal sight,
Sorrow for beauty of fair things that fade,
Till one strong thought consoles the hopeless night,
That from the wealth of God, where worlds are made
(The Treasure-house that nothing can decrease),
A never-ending tide shall ebb and flow;
The note must sound and die—
The eternal symphony shall never cease;
Divinely made, thought, shape and melody
Shall come like blossom and like blossom go.

EXILE

They with the world would have you reconciled,
Outgrow the impulse of these fantasies,
These rebel storms ; and act in grown-up wise.
They know not ; in your mother's arms you smiled ;

And yet your soul with timeless memories
Was sad ; and when old age shall claim you, child,
Your heart with young despair shall still be wild,
And childish mirth shall still light up your eyes.

Because a banished spirit in you dwells,
That strayed from lands beyond the unfurrowed sea,
And frets rejecting its captivity ;

You hear the horns of the forbidden chase,
The happy ghosts that down the woodland race,
And gallop through the trampled asphodels.

ON WATTS' PICTURE OF PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

Though borne like withered leaves upon a stream,
Faded and dead, they would not live again,
Nor, in the hard world, face the wiles of men ;
Their past is but the haunting of a dream.

And yet they would not sleep in asphodel,
Nor, for without remorse is their regret,
Drink deep of bliss and utterly forget ;
Not for all Heaven would they exchange their Hell.

And they give thanks because their punishment
Is sealed and sure, because their doom shall be
To go in anguish through Eternity,

Together on the never-resting air.
Beyond all happiness is their content
Who know there is no end to their despair.

AFTER SEEING
ROMEO AND JULIET

A tragedy? Yes, for the ancient foes,
When fateful friendship sealed their perished feud.
Not tragic for the wooer and the wooed
Was life's untimely, undivided close.

The timorous maid aroused by love arose
A fearless wife. The idler who pursued
His glittering aims, a vain and petty brood,
Through love attained to manhood and repose.

The two transfigured natures blent in one,
And this full, perfect, passionate unity,
For rough and dusty Earth too bright and high,

Sank in great calm, as dreaming unison
Of darkness and midsummer sound must die
Before the daily duty of the Sun.

1892

WRITTEN TO A YOUNG LADY

After seeing her assist at the extinguishing of a fire in a village in Russia

I saw you in the tumult of the fire ;
The flames unfurled a huge triumphant cloud.
You were all white against the shadowy crowd,
Like a calm priestess by a blazing pyre.

The glare had made of night a glowing sea,
With the full moon aloof in starless skies.
Your eyes outshone the fire ; your quiet eyes
Had robbed the moon of her tranquillity.

Surely before we both were born your face
Once brought me quiet in a fatal place.
When Troy was burned and all the dying men

Looked up and saw fair Helen in the fire,
And gladly fell, Ah ! You were Helen then,
And I who died, I had my heart's desire !

To that high capital where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay

Shelley.

The silver angel with sad sable wings
Flew down to meet her in the dewy field,
And broke her happy song half-way, and sealed
Her singing with the kiss of silent things,

And bade her seek the dark and banished land.
She did not raise wet, wistful eyes, nor pray
With outstretched arms for one, for one more day,
But to his shining hands she gave her hand.

She looked not back, though she remembered much,
But steadfastly she climbed the darkling stair,
And followed firm the strange and glistening touch,

Till in the whiteness of the silent hall,
Over her frozen eyes and faded hair,
Queenlike she bound the scarlet coronal.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

We have been loosened from the bonds of time,
And space in vain divides us. Near or far,
Absent, you shine before me like a star;
The hours when you are with me cease to chime.

Sadness we know, but not satiety;
We heed no march of seasons short or long,
O'erwhelmed and deafened by the tides of song,
Which roll increasing from eternity.

For us the glory of the day is done;
And sunset melts in a long silvery dream
Of darkness luminous with peace and dew;

We float, like ghosts upon death's endless stream,
In bliss; for only one soft unison
Breathes in the empty vastness: I and you.

" Quand vous serez bien vieille "

When you are old, no man will start to hear
That you were once more lovely than the day ;
Old age may change but cannot take away
From you ; and you will meet him without fear.

Yet when you think of him who loved fair things,
And singing of all beauty sang but you,
Nor dreamed you guessed the secret of his strings,
Then say : " Although he knew it not, I knew."

I shall be dead, and mid the shadowy throng
In the long twilight I shall not forget—
You still will tread the earth with royal grace ;

And if you smile remembering my song,
A moonbeam to the kingdoms of regret
Will come and flood with light the sunless place.

ΩΚΥΜΟΡΟΣ

A. G.

Gaily he rode into life's tournament,
Gaily he ran at tilt to win the prize,
April was in his heart and in his eyes,
Death called to him and unafraid he went.

Then pity those who grieve, but oh! not him.
Though taken from the sunlight to the grave,
He shared the fortune of the happy brave,
He tasted of a joy which grew not dim.

The Fates when they beheld young Sigurd ride
Fearless and happy through the roads of Spring,
To leap those flames which circled in a ring

The glory of his unawakened bride,
Mindful of what the tragic years should bring,
Whispered: "It is to-day he should have died."

" Parce que c'était elle ; parce que c'était moi '

That skies and hills and seas and all things blue
Are bluer for the light which filled your eyes,
That nature's treasure-house of harmonies
Is richer for the music that was you,

Comforts me not ; nor yet the word sublime,
That speaks of the unknown immensity,
Where we shall meet and understand, set free
For ever from the bonds of space and time.

You were a summer's day, all warmth and tune ;
Your soul a harbour, dark beneath the moon,
And flashing with soft lights of sympathy ;—

But oh ! the seal of grief more than these things
Is the old phrase that now so sadly rings :
That you were you, and I, alas ! am I.

ΛΕΙΡΙΟΕΣΣΑ ΚΑΛΥΞ

She listened to the music of the spheres ;
We thought she did not hear our happy strings ;
Stars diademed her hair in misty rings,
And all too late we knew those stars were tears.

Without she was a temple of pure snow,
Within were piteous flames of sacrifice ;
And underneath the dazzling mask of ice
A heart of swiftest fire was dying slow.

She in herself, as lonely lilies fold
Stiff silver petals over secret gold,
Shielded her passion, and remained afar

From pity. Cast red roses on the pyre !
She that was snow shall rise to Heaven as fire
In the still glory of the morning star.

Ω ΚΑΛΑ, Ω ΧΑΡΙΕΣΣΑ

I saw you by the summer candlelight—
You put to shame the sparkle of the gems,
The lights, the flashing of the diadems,
The moon and all the stars of summer night.

I saw you in the radiant morning hour—
You put to shame the white rose and the red ;
Your chiselled lips, your little lovely head,
Were fairer than the petals of a flower.

And on the shaven surface of the lawn,
You moved like music, and you smiled like dawn—
The leaves, the flowers, the dragon-flies, the dew,

Beside you seemed the stuff of coarser clay ;
And all the glory of the summer day
A background for the wonder that was you.

SPRING FLOODS

You are the first-born crocus of the spring;
The swiftest swallow from the Afric sands,
That comes back twittering to the northern lands;
The song that larks o'er melted snowfields sing.

You are the million melodies that ring
At dawn, in dew-drenched woods. You are the hour
When the frail almond-blossom breaks in flower,
And you are sweeter than that blossoming.

My life was like a frozen land; but you
Shone like the sun; the snows, in disarray,
Made of the plain and meadows one broad stream.

My perished hopes were leafless trees; to-day,
On the bright floods, by miracle made new,
They float like shadows of a silver dream

CANDLEMAS

The town is half awake ; the nave, the choir,
Are dark, and all is dim, within, without ;
But every chapel, fringed with the devout,
Is bright with February flowers of fire.

At Mass, a thousand years ago in Rome,
Thus Priest, thus Server at the altar bowed ;
Thus knelt, thus blessed itself the kneeling crowd,
At Dawn, within the secret catacomb.

Thus shall they meet for Mass, until the day
The glory of the world shall pass away ;
And beauty far away from human reach,

And power, and wealth beyond all mortal price,
And glory that outsoars all thought, all speech,
Speak in the whispered words of sacrifice.

THE CONSCRIPT

It were disloyalty, you say, to change
Your roving birthright for a paper rose,
And for a silver penny and brave clothes
To swear away your spirit's reckless range.

You will not sell your freedom for a plume,
Nor let your soul be brutalised in drill,
Nor break you to a meddling sergeant's will;
You that have access to the general's room.

I claim a larger freedom. If in line
I serve with others, all their strength is mine.
The large consent uplifts me upon wings.

And in the faces of the men that die,
Obedient to the bugle, I descry
The seal and mandate of the King of Kings.

LE PRINCE ERRANT

I am the Prince of unremembered towers
Destroyed before the birth of Babylon ;
And I was there when all the forest shone
While pale Medea culled her deadly flowers.

I heard the iron weeping of the King,
When Orpheus sang to life his buried joy ;
And I beheld upon the walls of Troy
The woman who made of death a little thing.

I heard the horn that shook the mountain tall,
Where Roland lay defeated : and the call
That fevered Tristram whispered to the sea,

And brought Iseult of Cornwall to his side.
I saw the Queen of Egypt like a bride
Go glorious to her dead Mark Antony.

To H. B.

with a book of verse

I too have travelled in the unknown land,
And anchored by the unfrequented shore ;
I too have heard the Stygian waters roar,
And seen the foam of Lethe kiss the sand.

I too have trodden the enchanted grass,
And seen the phantom hunters gallop by,
And heard the faëry bugle, and the sigh
Of banished gods that in the woodways pass.

And as a traveller brings his spoil to him
More richly graced in might and bravery,
So do I give to you these records dim

Of bright adventure in the fields forlorn—
To you who heard the blast of Roland's horn,
And saw Iseult set sail for Brittany.

GERMANY

"Hier darf ich sein"

The little town that on the hilltop stood
(Beneath the Neckar flowed towards the Rhine)—
The smiling slopes of cornfields and of vine—
The song that echoed in the silent wood—

The happy crowd that kept its holiday
(It warmed the heart of Faust at Easter-time);
The pointed gables stiff with ice and rime—
The gothic porch dark in the evening grey—

Yes, once there was a corner there for me,
A place of kindly warmth and simple joys;
A pipe to smoke, a mug of foaming beer,

And lofty music and sweet songs to hear;
And fairy-tales, and children's games and toys,
And tapers twinkling on the Christmas tree.

ITALY

The almond-trees of Tuscany in flower,
Narcissus and the tulip growing wild ;
White oxen ; and, a lily undefiled,
Beyond the misty plain, the marble tower ;

The roses and the corn upon the hill,
The Judas-tree against the solid blue ;
The fireflies, and the downy owl's too-whoo,
Thy Aziola, Shelley, plaintive still.

The lisp of Baiæ's phosphorescent foam ;
And Venice like a bubble made of dew,
A shell transfigured with the rainbow's hue ;

The Appian Way beneath a sullen sky
(The Shepherd's pipe is like a seagull's cry),
And in a silver rift, eternal Rome.

RUSSIA

What can the secret link between us be ?
Why does your song's unresting ebb and flow
Speak to me in a language that I know ?
Why does the burden of your mystery

Call like the message of a friend to me ?
Why do I love your plains of corn or snow,
The tears and laughter of your sleepless woe,
The murmur of your brown immensity ?

I cannot say, I only know that when
I hear your soldiers singing in the street,
Or see your peasants reaping in the wheat,
Your children playing on the road, your men

At prayer before a shrine, I wish them well.
It is with you, with you that I would dwell.

DOSTOYEVSKY

You healed the sore, you made the fearful brave,
They bless you for your lasting legacy :
The balm, the tears, the fragrant charity
You sought and treasured in your living grave.

The gifts you humbly took you greatly gave,
For solace of the soul in agony ;
When through the bars the brutal passions pry,
And mock the bonds of the celestial slave.

You wandered in the uttermost abyss ;
And there, amidst the ashes and the dust,
You spoke no word of anger nor of pride ;

You found the prints of steps divine to kiss ;
You looked right upwards to the stars, you cried :
" *Hosanna to the Lord, for He is just.*"

SHELLEY

Singer of cloud and star and rushing stream,
Let me bring but one garland to thy shrine,
For when a boy I drank of the dews divine
That in thy rainbow-coloured chalice gleam.

I scaled the silver ladder of thy dream,
And dizzy with the wonder of that wine,
I heard the song, I saw the eyes that shine
Unveiled, within the sanctuary supreme.

Then, like Actæon I became the prey,
The flying quarry of remorseless hounds ;
Hark ! in the distance I can hear them bay !

But in my heart the vision and the voice
Endure ; and though they slay me, I rejoice—
I saw that light, I heard those starry sounds.

MOZART

The sunshine, and the grace of falling rain,
The fluttering daffodil, the lilt of bees,
The blossom on the boughs of almond trees,
The waving of the wheat upon the plain—

And all that knows not effort, strife nor strain,
And all that bears the signature of ease,
The plunge of ships that dance before the breeze,
The flight across the twilight of the crane :

And all that joyous is, and young, and free,
That tastes of morning and the laughing surf ;
The dawn, the dew, the newly turned-up turf,

The sudden smile, the unexpressive prayer,
The artless art, the untaught dignity—
You speak them in the passage of an air.

WAGNER

O strange awakening to a world of gloom,
And baffled moonbeams and delirious stars,
Of souls that moan behind forbidden bars,
And waving forests swept by wings of doom ;

Of heroes falling in unhappy fight,
And wingèd messengers from eyries dim ;
And mountains ringed with flame, and shapes that
swim
In the deep river's green translucent night !

O restless soul, for ever seeking bliss,
Athirst for ever and unsatisfied,
Whether the woodland starts to the echoing horn,

Or dying Tristram moans by shores forlorn,
Or Siegfried rides through fire to wake his bride,
And shakes the whirling planets with a kiss !

BEETHOVEN

More mighty than the hosts of mortal kings,
I hear the legions gathering to their goal;
The tramping millions drifting from one pole,
The march, the counter-march, the flank that swings.

I hear the beating of tremendous wings,
The shock of battle and the drums that roll;
And far away the solemn belfries toll,
And in the field the careless shepherd sings.

There is an end unto the longest day;
The echoes of the fighting die away;
The evening breathes a benediction mild.

The sunset fades. There is no need to weep.
For night has come, and with the night is sleep,
And now the fiercest foes are reconciled.

VALE

I am for ever haunted by one dread,
That I may suddenly be swept away,
Nor have the leave to see you, and to say
Good-bye ; then this is what I would have said :

I have loved summer and the longest day ;
The leaves of June, the slumbrous film of heat,
The bees, the swallow, and the waving wheat,
The whistling of the mowers in the hay.

I have loved words which lift the soul with wings,
Words that are windows to eternal things.
I have loved souls that to themselves are true,

Who cannot stoop and know not how to fear,
Yet hold the talisman of pity's tear :
I have loved these because I have loved you.

You walked into the temple of a soul ;
You scanned the height, the depth, and each recess ;
You praised the silvery sombre loveliness ;
You heard the multitudinous organ roll.

Behind the towering altar, sad and pale,
An angel stood and uttered mournful sighs ;
And, answering the question in your eyes,
The angel pointed to a hanging veil.

You tore aside the veil, a dreadful gleam
Revealed the sights you had not feared to see,
And a great darkness fell upon the shrine.

You wept, but not your pain nor the lost dream
You pitied ; but that this sad thing should be—
And then once more the temple shone divine.

You were the Queen of evening, and the skies
Were soft above you, knowing you were fair,
The dewy gold of sunset in your hair,
And twilight in the stillness of your eyes.

You did not know your dear divinity,
And childlike, all unconscious that you walked
High in celestial air, you smiled and talked,
And stooped to pluck a rose, and gave it me,

As at the gate of heaven an angel-child
Might wonder at an outcast's pleading gaze,
An outcast kneeling at the golden bars,

And say: "Come, be my playmate, here the days
Are longer, and the ways outside are wild.
And you shall play with suns and silver stars."

Shall I pretend that I no more perceive
The peerless worth of your high qualities,
And say your precious words are honeyed lies
Which my conceit compels me to believe ;

And vow your lips divinely do deceive ;
Call false the unclouded earnest of your eyes,
And artificial the pure tears that rise,
When you take pity and with passion grieve ?

Shall I forswear my faith in Truth and Right,
Acknowledge only God's black cruelty ?
Yet if I bow but to an impious might,

More great and blind my faith in you must be ;
For you are Heaven and Hell and Day and Night
And Sun and Moon and Providence to me.

I dreamed that I was lifted to the skies
And found her in the starless end of space ;
There was no smile of welcome on her face,
There were no tears in her immortal eyes,

She did not recollect nor recognise ;
But comfort, like a dawn, then seemed to break ;
I said, " It is a dream, I shall awake
And find her turning Earth to Paradise."

I wake, and know that nothing can restore
My dearest to the Earth, to sight and sound
I know that I no longer hope to soar

And find her shining at the heavenly bound.
She is of yesterday for evermore ;
All my to-days are buried in the ground.

And now the first cold numbness of the blow
Is past, past also is the secret smart,
The dizzy panic of the helpless heart,
And the rebellious tears have ceased to flow.

Now all the world stands out distinct and sad,
And laughter rings more hollow and more vain ;
Grief seems more palpable, more plenteous pain,
And the mad strife grows hour by hour more mad.

Now I can say : " Thank God she is not here ;
Thank God that yonder, safe upon the shore,
She sleeps beneath the cold and boundless night,

And hears the wailing of the waves no more,
Nor moan of men, in careless fortune's might,
Who cry for help, and as they cry despair."

O star of dawn, descended from the spheres,
From space of gold and snow and flaming zone ;
Princes there were enough among your peers
To live and love and die for you alone.

You were the Goddess of a guarded shrine,
I was the beggar lingering at the gate ;
You left behind the pomp and solemn state,
You sought the Earth discrowned and twice divine.

Now you have laid aside your diadem,
And bound wild roses in your royal hair,
And I may kiss your shining garment's hem.

Truly my soul has scaled the rainbow stair ;
The world lies glistening like a fiery gem,
And all the stars are singing in the air.

She is a vessel of mysterious snow,
A water-lily anchored in dark reeds,
That in the evening's violet afterglow
Unfolds its hidden heart of flaming seeds.

She has the halo of the lonely moon,
And round her floats the jessamin's faint musk ;
With summer birds and bees she is in tune,
And silvery moths and the delirious dusk.

In the green twilight of her leafy bower
She gave me water from a whispering well,
And there, a secret sun, she shone for me.

Now I am banished from the ecstasy,
Her face that filled the imperishable hour,
Sways like a phantom moon my soul in Hell.

I dare not pray to thee, for thou art won
Rarely by those by whom thou hast been wooed ;
Thou comest unsolicited, unsued,
Like sudden splendours of the midnight sun.

Yet in my heart the hope shall still abide
That thou hast haply heard my unbreathed prayer ;
That in the stifling moment of despair
I shall turn round and find thee by my side.

As a sad pilgrim who has wandered far,
And hopes not any longer for the day,
But blinded by black thickets finds no way,

Comes to a rift of trees in that sad plight,
And suddenly sees the unending aisles of night,
And in the emerald gloom the morning star.

My love is glad and strong as the salt sea,
And thou the moon above it, shining bright.
Thou shalt look down upon me thus in might ;
Thus fathomless and wide my love shall be,

And vast and dim with a green world of waves,
And rich with sunken gold and drifting weeds,
And derelict hulls and wrecks of perished deeds,
And the drowned sapphire sunlight of the caves.

But all this huge tumultuous element
Shall whisper like a woodland stream, and sleep
Calm as a slumbering child ; shall smile and weep

In dreams of bliss, obedient, soft and still ;
For thou, my moon, from thy dark firmament
Upon this sea shalt write thy silver will.

I watched you in the distance tall and pale,
Like a swift swallow in a pearly sky ;
Your eyelids drooped like petals wearily,
Your face was like a lily of the vale.

You had the softness of all Summer days,
The silver radiance of the twilight hour,
The mystery of bluebell-haunted ways,
The passion of the white syringa's flower.

I watched you, and I knew that I had found
The long-delaying, long-expected Spring ;
I knew my heart had found a tune to sing ;

That strength to soar was in my spirit's wing ;
That life was full of a triumphant sound ;
That death could only be a little thing.

We drifted to each other like two birds,
That meet high in the windy middle air,
Then fly away again ; each unaware
That there had passed between us silent words

Then like two pilgrims tired and travel-sore
We sought for shelter from the rising tide
Of night, in the dark hollow mountain-side,
And, mutually remembering, met once more.

But when the morning came and we looked down
Upon the glittering cities of the plain,
We lingered in the lonely crag content.

The world which cannot know the hills will frown ;
But sweet and blissful is our banishment
In the high pinnacles of wind and rain.

Good-bye !—It was a casual good-bye :
I was not going far, nor yet for long.
" Good-bye !—and you will write, and in the throng,
You will not quite forget, nor yet shall I."

And yet it seemed to me, I know not why,
The birds were singing a most mournful song ;
I seemed to hear a tinkling funeral gong ;
" Summer is dead," it said, and " youth must die."

Yes, though while life shall last, a subtle thread
Shall bind us, yet the wondrous hour is dead,
The hour of hours I thought could never die ;

The dream has spread irrevocable wings ;
In vain for me the lark his message sings—
Oh ! would that with the dream the pain could fly !

To E. S.

Your singing brings the rustle of the trees,
The tall trees sighing on the mountain-side ;
It brings a whisper from the foamless tide
That broadening fills the ample estuaries.

Your singing brings the freshness of the breeze
That comes at twilight to the breathless plain ;
The cry of moaning ghosts that call in vain
From wandering prisons in the winds and seas.

Your singing brings to me the final peace,
Dissolves the torment of perplexity,
And guides my spirit to a tranquil home ;

As when the moon compels the storm to cease
And calms the wind ; and all the skeins of foam
Unravel softly on the vanquished sea.

STOP-SHORTS

The lake is growing grey : the lotus flower
Remains yet roseate with the sunset hour.
The moon has climbed above the mountain's rim :
The water shines : the lotus flower is dim.

The mist is on the sky and sea, a veil :
And in the silver stuff a russet sail.

I waited for you all the dark night long,
And listen lonely to the sky-lark's song.

The twilight is not darker than the day,
And pipes are playing somewhere far away.

Here once a thousand men in battle died,
Where the red clover grows by the wayside.

He drank too deeply of your eyes too kind :
Small wonder that the god of love is blind.

CORRESPONDENCE

I told her she was beautiful, it's true ;
But I said nothing when I wrote to you.

" *Nothing shall come of nothing : speak again !* "

Yet out of nothing God made time and space,
The stars, the sun, the summer and your face.

The presage of all beauty that shall be,
The ghost of all dead beauty in the past,
Have met together in mortality :
This is incarnate beauty come at last.

TO A HOSTESS

Diana, wise and watchful at the feast,
I love you : you the loveliest, I the least.

The god of love: ah me! his mother's son!
Took you to be his playmate for a while.
His mother loved me, but you see
Resigned to you her own supremacy.

When Psyche shows the world as less for light.
Smile and grow pale, and softly say good night.

Your eyes would damn a saint, so from the skies
Drew down the highest angel. Your soft eyes.

Your power is with you in the hour of day
So far are you, and yet not far away;
For as you make the sweetest stars more bright
A more tender radiant rises at my night.

There is a lovely promise in your eyes
Light the answer in a Paradise.

SIDLEY

The years go by, and every year we say,
"She never was more lovely than to-day."

When Beauty with the gods left Jove's high place
She wandered homeless till she found your face.

The moon is more than sun and more than star,
But Cynthia than the moon is lovelier far.

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